

Industry employment guide

Guide to labour statistics

Learn about our different industry employment measures and how to use them

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Overview

The ABS produces a range of industry employment statistics that provide different insights. As such, it can be challenging to determine which data to use. This guide is designed to help you understand what industry employment data are available, where to find them, and how they are best used.

The [Employment \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/concepts-and-sources/employment\)](#) and [Jobs \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/concepts-and-sources/jobs\)](#) chapters of Labour Statistics: Concepts Sources and Methods have more information on employment and jobs related concepts and how we produce the data.

Our best source of industry information

The [Labour Account \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release) provides estimates of jobs, employed people, hours and income in Australia. It uses the best available labour market data to create our most comprehensive source of information. A full list of data sources used is available in the [Labour Account \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account\)](/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account) chapter of the Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods.

The key data source for Labour Account employment is the [Labour Force Survey \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) (LFS), which provides robust estimates of employment and unemployment. It is then combined with unpublished [Quarterly Business Indicator Survey \(/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-indicators-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-indicators-australia/latest-release) (QBIS) data which provides higher quality industry of employment distribution estimates than LFS. This is explored more in 'Assigning Industry' below.

The Labour Account should be used for analysis of employed people and jobs by industry division and subdivision over time.

Sector

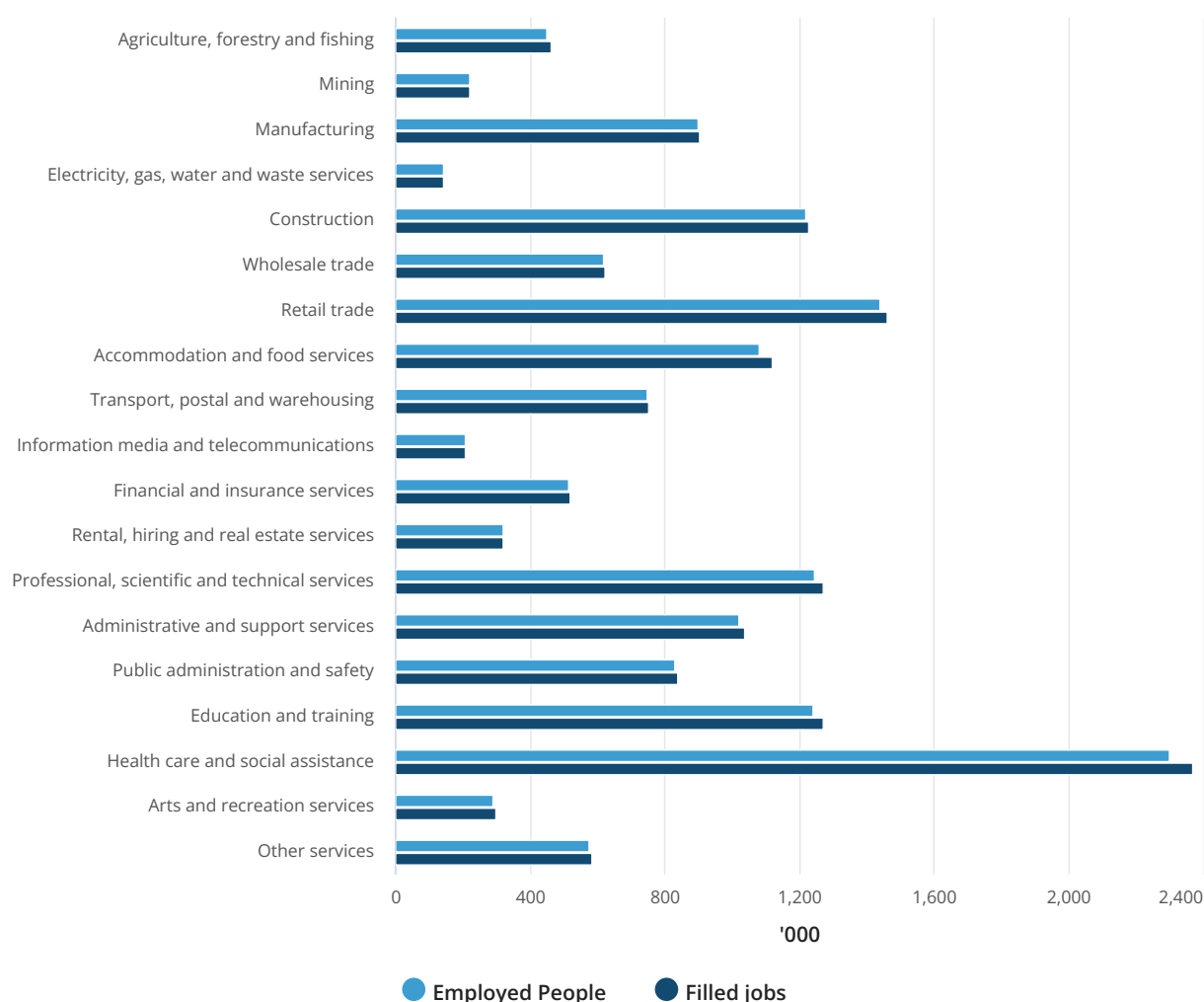
The Labour Account should also be used for analysis of employed people and jobs across and between the public and private sectors, and the market and non-market sectors.

The public sector comprises those organisations that are [government or controlled by government \(/statistics/classifications/standard-economic-sector-classifications-australia-sesca/latest-release#public-private-classification\)](/statistics/classifications/standard-economic-sector-classifications-australia-sesca/latest-release#public-private-classification) (for example, state and federal government departments, local government). By comparison, the non-market sector reflects those parts of the economy that produce goods or services not sold at economically significant prices (i.e. where the way the organisation operates and the price for the goods or services isn't market driven). They generally operate with funding from the government.

In the Labour Account (and the National Accounts), the Health care and social assistance, Education and training and Public administration and safety industries are combined to provide a proxy for the non-market sector, with the remaining industries comprising the market sector. See [Standard Economic Sector Classifications of Australia \(/statistics/classifications/standard-economic-sector-classifications-australia-sesca/latest-release#concepts\)](/statistics/classifications/standard-economic-sector-classifications-australia-sesca/latest-release#concepts) and [A primer on labour productivity \(/articles/primer-labour-productivity#drivers-of-employment-for-non-market-activity\)](/articles/primer-labour-productivity#drivers-of-employment-for-non-market-activity) for more information.

[Public Sector Employment and Earnings \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release) also provides high quality public sector (only) estimates for employee jobs as of each June and cash wages and salaries for each financial year, including industry division, level of government and state and territory.

Employed people and filled jobs by industry, December quarter 2023 (Seasonally adjusted)



Source: [Labour Account Australia, December 2023 \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/dec-2023\)](https://statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/dec-2023).

Differences between the Labour Account and the Labour Force Survey

Labour Force Survey (LFS) industry data is released earlier than Labour Account industry data (as the Labour Account relies on a range of data sources). While the LFS data may provide some useful early insights, the Labour Account data is our definitive read on industry employment and jobs levels and changes over time. The LFS industry data provides important context for other LFS data, however collecting industry information from a household survey has limitations and these estimates may not provide the best indication of real-world levels or changes.

There are also some key differences in how the Labour Account and LFS industry employment estimates are produced. The Labour Account includes estimates of the number of people and jobs in each industry, whereas LFS only includes estimates of the number of employed people in each industry, based on their main job.

Assigning Industry

The LFS assigns industry according to a person's description of their main job. For example, a sales assistant works at a small store selling stationery at the front of a warehouse. Their customers are members of the public, however

their employer makes most of its profits through wholesale contracts supplying stationery to a department store chain. Based on the sales assistant's description of their job, they would be assigned to the Retail trade industry in the LFS.

The Labour Account uses the economic activity of the employer to determine industry, so the sales assistant's job will be counted in the Wholesale trade industry. This is also where their contribution to production would be reflected in the National Accounts.

Multiple job holders

An employed person can have more than one job, so there will always be more filled jobs than employed people in Australia. We refer to employed people with more than one job as multiple job holders.

The LFS only collects an employed person's industry of main job, even if that person is a multiple job holder. As a result, the LFS industry estimates only reflect the number of people employed in each industry in their main job. For example, Alex works 5 days a week as a barista in a café and has a second job stacking shelves at a supermarket on Tuesday nights. In the LFS industry employment estimates, Alex will be counted as one employed person in the Accommodation and food services industry as their main job is as a barista.

The Labour Account industry employment estimates count everyone working a job in each industry regardless of whether it is their main job or a secondary job. This provides estimates of the total number of people employed in each industry. Alex will be counted as an employed person in both the Accommodation and food services and Retail trade industries, although they will only be counted as one employed person at the Australia level.

For more information, see [Labour Account: Person Quadrant \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account/persons-quadrant\)](https://statistics.detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account/persons-quadrant) in Labour Statistics: Concepts Sources and Methods.

Scope

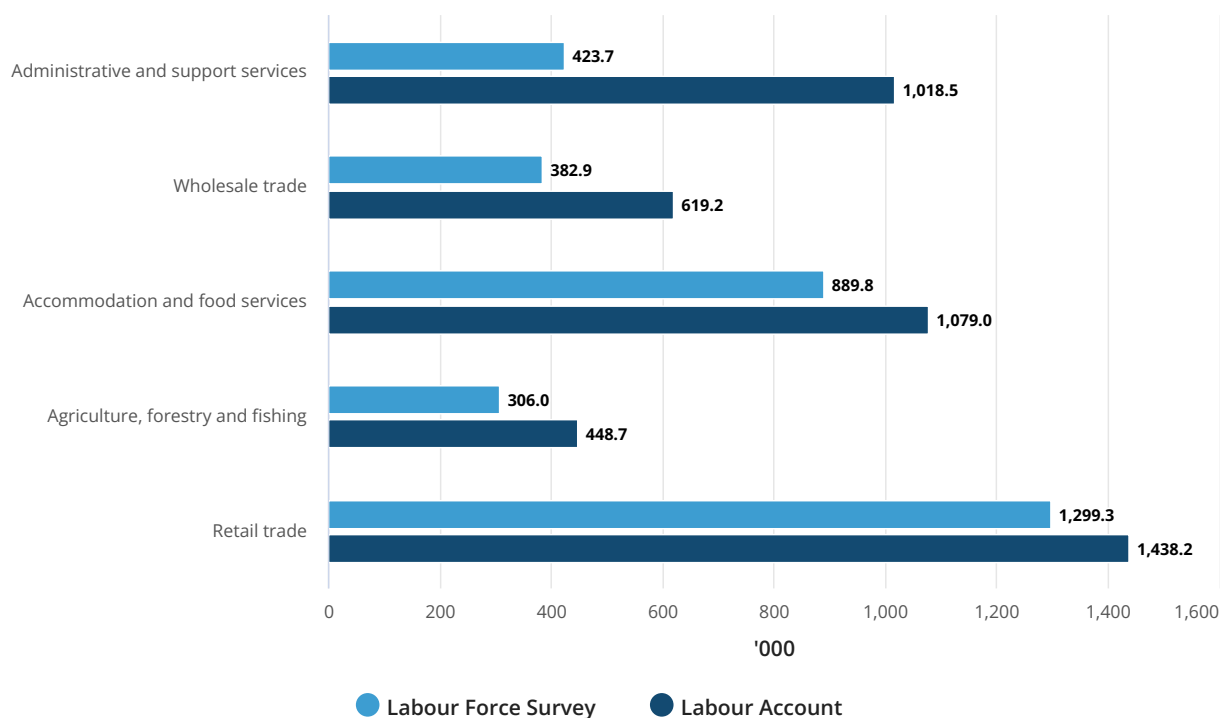
The Labour Account industry estimates include three groups of workers who are outside of the scope of the LFS. These are child workers (employed children aged 5-14), employed short-term non-residents and permanent defence force personnel.

Reference period

The reference periods of the LFS and Labour Account can also affect comparisons. LFS industry employment data is collected in the mid-month of every quarter (February, May, August and November). The Labour Account people and jobs estimates, including for industry of employment, are as at the end of the last month in the quarter (March, June, September and December). Differences in the reference periods can cause some variation between the published estimates.

Industries with the largest differences in employed people between the LFS and Labour Account are shown in the graph below.

Employed people by selected industries, December quarter 2023 (Seasonally adjusted)



Source: [Labour Account Australia, December 2023 \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/dec-2023\)](#), and [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/nov-2023\)](#).

The large difference in Administrative and support services is mostly due to the different ways industry is assigned for labour hire workers. In the LFS, people who work for a labour hire firm are likely to incorrectly identify their employer and the activity undertaken at their workplace as the business they are providing labour to (rather than who they are actually employed and paid by - the labour hire firm). In the Labour Account, labour hire workers are assigned to the Administrative and support services industry, as reported by their employer.

As Labour Accounts is more comprehensive regarding both classifications and coverage, it is recommended that Labour Account data is used over LFS data for analysing industry statistics.

Using Single Touch Payroll data

We have been using weekly Single Touch Payroll (STP) data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to produce unique insights into the labour market since April 2020, including to understand short-term changes across different industries.

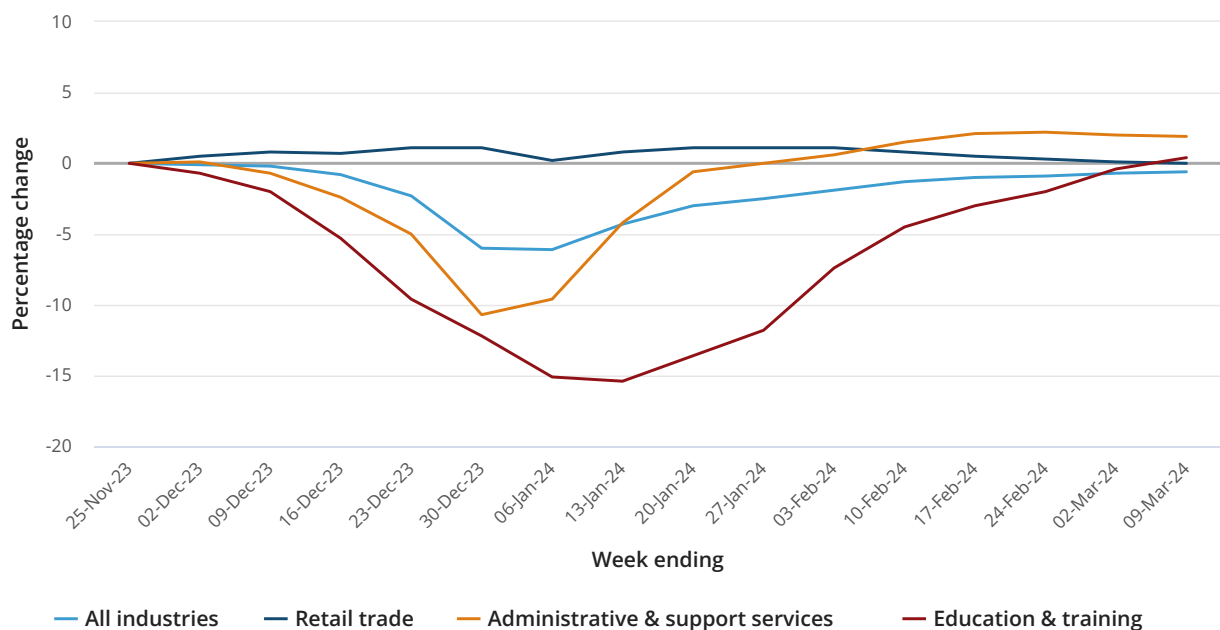
The [Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/monthly-employee-earnings-indicator/latest-release\)](#), released quarterly, includes industry estimates of wages and salaries paid by employers. From February 2026, it will also include monthly employee jobs measure, by industry, to provide insights into jobs growth and its influence on the composition of total wages and salaries.

Up until its retirement in July 2025, [Payroll Jobs \(/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release\)](#) (previously Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages) provided week-to-week changes in jobs, including across all industries. Payroll Jobs indexes can be used to understand the short term changes in industry employment between January

2020 and March 2025.

[Public Sector Employee and Earnings \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release\)](#), released annually, contains public sector cash wages and salaries for the financial year and employee jobs for the month of June, by industry division.

Change in payroll jobs in late 2023 and early 2024 (Original)



Source: [Weekly Payroll Jobs, week ending 16 March 2024 \(/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/week-ending-16-march-2024\)](#).

Regional data

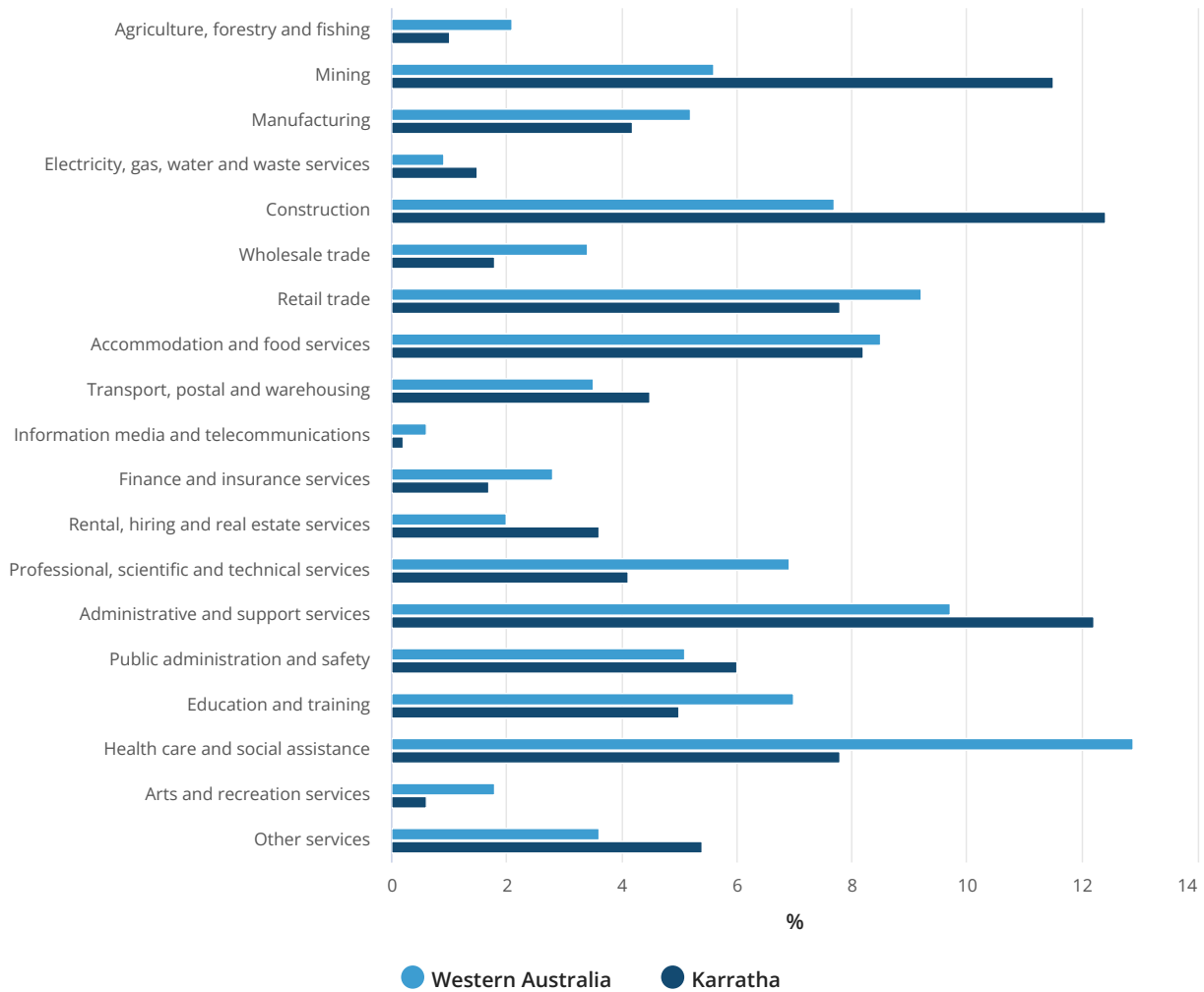
[Jobs in Australia \(/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release\)](#) provides industry of employment data by age, sex, employment size and more than 2,200 regions. The statistics are derived from the [Linked Employer Employee Dataset \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/administrative-data/linked-employer-employee-dataset-leed\)](#) (LEED), which brings together personal income tax and business data.

Use Jobs in Australia for detailed analysis of employment and jobs, particularly by region. You can create your own customised tables using [Microdata and TableBuilder: Jobs and Income of Employed Persons \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/jobs-australia\)](#).

Example: Comparing industry employment by region

In Western Australia (and at a national level), the industries with the most jobs are Healthcare and social assistance, Administrative and support services and Retail trade. By comparison, in Karratha the industries with the most jobs are Administrative and support services, Construction and Mining. This reflects the strong influence of mining-related activities in the surrounding Pilbara region on the local labour market.

Industry distribution of jobs, Western Australia and Karratha, 2020-21 (Original)



Source: [Jobs in Australia, 2020-21 \(/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/2020-21-financial-year\)](https://statistics.laureate.net/jobs/jobs-australia/2020-21-financial-year).

I'm looking for industry employment by...

This table summarises the most relevant industry employment data sources by topic. The quality of industry data has been prioritised when assigning ratings.

Some of these data sources have extra topics available through their TableBuilder and microdata products. We produce additional data sources which also include industry employment statistics on these topics not included below (for example, estimates from our Labour Force supplementary surveys).

Topics available by data source (a)(b)

	LA (c)	EEH	JIA	PJ	PSEE	AI	LFS	Census
Employer characteristics								
Industry subdivision	✓	✓	■	■		■	■	□
Sector	✓	■	□	■(d)	✓(e)		□	
State/territory		✓			■	■		
Person characteristics								
Sex	✓	✓	✓	■			■	■
Age groups	✓	✓	✓	■			■	□
State/territory	■(f)		✓	■			■	■
Region			✓				□	■
Education							□	□
Job characteristics								
Part-time and full-time		□					✓	
Employment arrangement		□	□				✓	
Pay setting method		✓						

✓ Recommended for this topic in relation to industry data.

■ Published for this topic in relation to industry data however some [limitations \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concept-s-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/concepts-and-sources/earnings#abs-data-sources\)](#) should be noted.

□ Available for this topic upon request or via TableBuilder and microdata products.

a. Ratings provide guidance on the relative quality of the different sources. Business sources generally provide more accurately reported industry employment data than household sources and are recommended for each topic where available.

b. Acronyms used in table are: Labour Account (LA), Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH), Jobs in Australia (JIA), Payroll Jobs (PJ), Public Sector Employment and Earnings (PSEE), Australian Industry (AI) and Labour Force Survey (LFS).

c. The ABS recommends Labour Account as the best source of aggregate industry level data.

d. Private sector only for limited industries.

e. Public sector only.

f. Modelled outputs for jobs and hours by industry are typically released annually in a feature [article \(/articles/modelled-state-and-territory-industry-estimates-jobs-and-hours-worked\)](#).

Data and resources available

This section summarises the industry employment data available according to their key features. It also lists other information available to help you understand industry employment data.

Industry employment data sources

We produce many data sources measuring industry employment. The most relevant data sources are included below.

ABS industry employment data sources

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Account (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Key estimates on jobs, people, hours and income. Best source of industry employment and jobs data. Best source of employment and jobs data for the public and private sector, and the market and non-market sector. Sex and age group by industry and Total All Industries.
Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Two yearly	Employee earnings and hours paid for, by industry. For customised or detailed data analysis, use Microdata and TableBuilder: Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia) .
Jobs in Australia (/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Filled jobs estimates for more than 2,200 regions, including industry, age, sex and occupation data, based on Personal Income Tax data. More detailed data available through Microdata and TableBuilder: Jobs and Income of Employed Persons (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/jobs-australia) .
Payroll Jobs (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release)	Admin data	Quarterly	Payroll jobs indexes (Jan 2020 to Mar 2025) including percentage changes, based on Single Touch Payroll data. Retired July 2025.
Public Sector Employment and Earnings (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Public sector estimates of financial year cash wages and salaries and employee jobs for June by industry, state/territory, and level of government. Best source of public sector data for these reference periods.
Australian Industry (/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/latest-release)	Business survey	Annual	Information on employment, earnings, and labour costs by industry and business characteristics.
Labour Force Survey, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release)	Household survey	Monthly	Headline estimates of employment, unemployment, and hours worked. There is also detailed data available in Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia) and TableBuilder: Labour Force Survey (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/labour-force-survey) .
Census (/census/find-census-data)	Household survey	Five yearly	Industry, occupation, income, geographic and demographic data for every Australian resident. Detailed data products (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/census-population-and-housing) can be used for customised tables and analysis.

Other information

- [Employment and unemployment statistics \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment\)](#)
- [Jobs statistics \(/statistics/labour/jobs\)](#)
- [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release\)](#)
- [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\) \(/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-industrial-classification-anzsic/latest-release\)](#)